

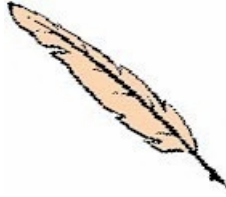
# Random Encounters The Itinerant Bazaar

By Stan!



## Caveat Emptor

The Itinerant Bazaar would hardly deserve its name if the only vendors were the three permanent members. The proprietors hand pick particular vendors to go to each stop the bazaar makes. Their criteria include the temperament of the merchant, local demand for the merchandise, and the size of the Market Day they are attending. It is important to the proprietors that the number of merchants associated with the bazaar never outnumbers the local vendors, and that the two groups never go head-to-head selling the same materials. They want visits from the bazaar to be remembered as positive events, even by the local "competition."



Presented below are a handful of vendors that can often be found at the Itinerant Bazaar. They are not permanently attached to the bazaar like those described previously, but they are merchants with whom the proprietors have longstanding business relationships.

The bazaar should not be limited to these choices, though. The DM can add in any booth selling any merchandise or service that she likes. Everything from rare books to fortunetelling to divine healing -- if there's something people will pay for, the bazaar may have a vendor willing to sell it.

## Blades of Renown

In just about any place the bazaar visits where weapons sales are not restricted, you will find Sam McLintough's stall. A middle-aged human, Sam is not a weaponsmith, but he does sell an inventory of most martial weapons and quite a few exotic ones as well. What's more, he carries only weapons that are enhanced in one way or another (most have only +1 enhancements, but others are special or even unique items). Some of the weapons are, in fact, from the arsenal he carried in his youth. Sam was a mercenary for many years before losing his left eye and right hand in a skirmish that meant nothing more to him than the few hundred gold pieces he'd been paid. Still, he thinks he's lucky to have survived, and rather than seeking a magical way to restore himself, he decided to retire and become an arms merchant. Every weapon he sells comes with a tale of pain and death -- Sam's odd way of discouraging violence while selling the instruments that deal it out. He does not make the weapons himself. He buys them used, often from scavengers who took them from the corpses of fallen warriors, and he insists on hearing as much about the item's history before he buys the item. Often, if the weapon has no history, Sam does not seek to add it to his inventory. (Most items follow the prices listed in the Player's Handbook and Dungeon Master's Guide, but if DMs want to attach an unknown flaw to the weapon or have it be sought out by a persistent former owner who wants the item back, these situations could bring the price down a bit at the DM's discretion.)

## Fhildul's Home Brews

Fhildul is a human barbarian whose family served as the shamans and healers for his tribe. However, when he was very young, a plague wiped out all but a few members of the tribe, including all the other members of his family. Left to his own devices, Fhildul traveled the world, and eventually the planes, looking for a place to fit in. He finally found it with the Itinerant Bazaar. He maintains a very simple stall from which he sells potions, poultices, alchemical mixtures, and barbarian charms. Sadly, because his parents died before they could teach him the family trade completely, Fhildul's products are not always as potent or effective as they ought to be, so he sells them for 15% below the usual market price. Whenever someone uses one of his products there is a 20% chance that it will fail to have any effect, and a 5% chance that it will do 1 point of temporary Constitution damage to the person using it instead of doing what Fhildul stated it would do.

## Peacock Quills

This stall takes its name not only from the wares, but the proprietor as well. Imon Peacock has a passion for all writing instruments, including inks, pigments, and various papers and canvases. His booth is lined with tubes containing parchment, rice paper, vellum, papyrus, and just about every other kind of writing surface known. He also has a large selection of journals and diaries, bound in everything from simple cloth to leather to intricately woven designs of stone and bones. He has even mastered the art of making volumes that are suitable for use as spellbooks, and they are much sought after by wizards who can afford such artistry. But the heart of the stall is a cabinet that remains inside the wagon -- a cabinet that is covered with dozens of slim drawers. In each drawer rests a single pen, quill, or other writing implement. Some are plain and made of simple wood, while others are ostentatious with swooping feathers covered with a rainbow of colors and inlaid with gold and precious jewels. Imon can speak at great length about the process used to make each quill. He also makes a very flowery speech saying that the pen one uses

to write with often says more about the person than the words written.

Perhaps more interestingly, he has a theory that you can tell a great deal about a person by the quill he or she uses, and claims that he can tell you a great deal about a person simply by looking at a one-page sample of handwriting. If asked to demonstrate, he can always tell what sort of pen or quill was used to write the page, the origin of the ink used, and the date the paper was made. Furthermore, he can determine with 80% accuracy the following information: age, gender, race, native language, geographical location at the time of the writing, and the relationship between the author and the intended reader. (He has many ranks in Spot, Knowledge (geography), Craft (papermaking), and Profession (scribe).)

### **All Things Precious**

At first this might seem like a simple moneychanger's stall and, indeed, that is one of the services that Haypenny Foster performs, but it is not his sole business. In fact, because many Market Days already have one or more local moneychangers, the young halfling proprietor will often refuse to perform those duties, despite the fact that he knows he could certainly provide a more accurate assessment than the local shysters. Still, he makes a living providing his expert appraisal services for a flat fee and through buying and selling gems, jewelry, and small art objects.

One wonders how he makes money if his appraisal skill is so keen, his morals are so impeccable, and his deals are so fair. The answer is that unlike others, he is a global trader. He knows that different cultures place different values on objects. And since the Itinerant Bazaar travels to more different cultures than most people have heard of, Haypenny can buy an item at a fair price in one culture, then sell it at a fair price in a culture (perhaps half a world away) that values it more. He always arrives in town with a great number of gems and precious metals that the locals will value, and he usually leaves with a wagon full of what they consider practically useless.

As an example of how this might work, the bazaar recently visited a Market Day in the frozen north lands. The land there is rich in copper ore, and they use the metal in their coins, jewelry, and living utensils. On the other hand, the weather is too harsh for them to tend anything but small herds of goats with very coarse wool. Haypenny brought with him bundles of spun lamb's wool and a few rolls of cotton cloth. He sold all this and practically filled his wagon with copper in various forms. Three days later, the bazaar visited a town with a magic college that utilized copper wiring, tubing, and mesh constantly in their labs. They didn't have any particular material Haypenny could use, but he eventually let them convince him to simply take gold coins.

### **Caveat Emptor**

At the Itinerant Bazaar, the buyer should most definitely beware. The vendors and their wares come from all over the world -- indeed, all over the planes -- and they know they will be gone long before a customer can return to register a complaint or ask for a refund. This is not to say that the goods are fraudulent. The proprietors are careful to make sure that the vendors are as honest as possible with customers about the capabilities and qualities of their merchandise. However, they will sometimes omit a fact or two in the pursuit of making a sale.

For example, all of the weapons sold at Blades of Renown have the magical enhancements and qualities Sam McLintough claims. However, they sometimes have other qualities (such as curses, or even sentience) that he fails to mention. He also gets his stock from less-than-scrupulous sources, and some may have been stolen from owners who are scouring the planes looking for their missing weapons (and hoping to take some revenge on the thieves).

As in any marketplace, the characters should remember that any item that costs less gold than it should will generally have some other price attached to it.

### **Bringing the Parts Together**

With more stores to work with, DMs may find that they can use the bazaar, the proprietors, the rules, and the stores in several ways. It may be best to have the Itinerant Bazaar serve as a place to introduce an item to the PCs, or perhaps the PCs have to locate a specific item for someone, and one of the merchants at the bazaar has the item they seek (but, of course, isn't easy to find).

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